

Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 FAA-00

DOT-00 IO-14 DRC-01 /138 W
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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6948

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OTRA, OVIP, LE, IR

SUBJ: LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER VISITS IRAN

REF: BEIRUT 6818

1. LEBANESE PRI MIN TAQIEDDIN SOLH, ACCOMPANIED BY FONMIN FOUAD NAFFAH, PAID EIGHT-DAY GOODWILL VISIT TO IRAN JUNE 7-14. FIRST SIX DAYS WERE OFFICIAL VISIT AT INVITATION PRIMIN HOVEYDA, A FORMER STUDENT OF SOLH'S IN BEIRUT, WHILE FINAL TWO DAYS WERE TO OPEN LEBANON TOURIST WEEK PROMOTION AT INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL. SOLH HAD AUDIENCE WITH SHAH AND SEVERAL ROUNDS OF TALKS WITH HOVEYDA, FONMIN KHALATBARI, AND OTHER MINISTERS.

2. AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE WAS REACHED PROVIDING FOR UNSPECIFIED IRANIAN AID TO LEBANON, AND JOINT TASK COMMITTEE WAS SET UP TO WORK OUT DETAILS. ACCORDING TO LEBANESE EMBOFF, COMMITTEE WILL MEET IN BEIRUT THIS SUMMER TO DISCUSS SUCH PROJECTS AS BEIRUT-DAMASCUS HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT, PORT DEVELOPMENT, AND RECONSTRUCTION OF WAR-DAMAGED AREAS IN SOUTH. HE SAID ONLY FIRM DECISION TAKEN DURING VISIT WAS RESUMPTION OF AIR SERVICE WHICH HAD BEEN WORKED OUT BY AIRLINE DELEGATION AND MERELY RATIFIED BY TWO PRIMINS.

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EMBOFF SAID HOVEYDA HAD AGREED VISIT LEBANON IN OCTOBER.

3. COMMENT: SOLH'S VISIT, FIRST BY LEBANESE PRIMIN FOR EIGHT YEARS, WAS IMPORTANT PRINCIPALLY AS ANOTHER SYMBOLIC EXPRESSION OF IRAN'S DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ARABS (MFA OFFICIAL SAID SOLH WAS THIRTIETH HIGH ARAB OFFICIAL TO VISIT IN PAST SIX MONTHS). LEBANESE HERE WERE SURPRISED AND PLEASED AT WARMTH OF RECEPTION, EXTENSIVE PRESS COVERAGE OF EVERY ASPECT OF VISIT, AND PROSPECT OF CLOSER ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH IRAN.
HELMS

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